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Ventures in Verse

FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING
RUTH GERALDINE ASHEN
CLASS OF 1931

It's a sad thing
  when a man is to be so soon forgotten
And the shining in his soul
  gone from the earth
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing
  when a man shall die
And forget love
  which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing
  that a man shall forget love
And he not dead but walking in the field
  of a May morning
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of Stanford Writing*, 1931

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Walter Truttwell.

VENTURES IN VERSE.

10/-

VENTURES IN VERSE

BY

PERCY W. CRUTTWELL

JOHN HODGES,
KING WILLIAM STREET, CHARING CROSS, LONDON.
1877.

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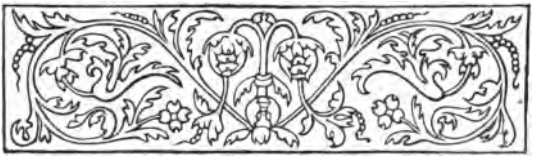

INTRODUCTORY.

IF anyone looks into this little book they will naturally remark that these attempts at versification deal almost exclusively with two subjects—Love and War. Kindly then remember that these romantic and exhilarating recreations are practically the only resources of an amateur poet. In my case I labour under the additional disadvantage of knowing very little of either. However, if I dealt with the subject of which I know most,

and which occupies nearly all my time, I fancy that these ventures in verse would be even a greater infliction than they are in their present form.

I fully expect to be well laughed at. Perhaps I deserve it. I feel certain that if anybody is kind enough to wade through these compositions there must be many a smile at my expense —especially among those who have a personal knowledge of the author.

February, 1877.

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LOVE ON THE OCEAN.

AINTILY my lady trips,
Pursing up her pretty lips,
Smiling at her slides and slips,
On the greasy shingle;
Round the rocks, across the sand,
Floating hair by breezes fanned,
How a touch of that small hand
Makes my fingers tingle!

Snugly seated in the boat,
Further from the shore we float,
Lumps are rising in my throat,
  Due to love's emotion:
Wavelets lap against the keel,
Fondly at her feet I kneel,
None can picture what I feel,
  Here upon the ocean.

Sweeter scene than artists paint,
Loving looks without restraint,
Yet I feel I'm rather faint,
  Something's wrong, I'm certain,—
Can it be the bracing air?
Must I tell her? Do I dare?
Yes! it is the *mal de mer*,—
  Kindly drop the curtain!

A GLIMPSE OF GLORY.

SEE, the morning bright'ning
Cheers the weary soul,
Love is like the lightning,
Death the thunder roll ;
Life the dark cloud speeding,
Heavy in its form,
Heaven the gleam succeeding,
Sunshine after storm.

Heaven is approaching,
With its joys sublime,

Battles are encroaching
  On our narrow time.
All is desolation,
  All is nearly done,
Nation warreth nation,
  Father warreth son.
And in deep commotion
  They who love the fight
Drink the fiery potion,
  Happy in their might.

Time is now impending,
  Soon it will be o'er,
When, in fissures rending,
  Earth shall be no more.
When on pinions soaring
  Ye shall seek the skies,

And, your Lord adoring,
  Joyful songs shall rise.

Some are calmly sleeping
  In their Saviour's love,
Others, downwards weeping,
  Gazing up above.
While the time is flying,
  Till their tasks are done,
When, their bonds defying,
  They shall seek the Son.

Welcome, weary mortals,
  Raise the hymn of praise,
See, fair Zion's portals
  Gleam through golden haze!
Humbly, meekly kneeling,
  Faltering they fall,

To His grace appealing,
  See these sinners all.
" True is our repentance,
  " Lift the weary load,
" Saviour, grant us entrance
  " To Thy blest abode!"

Dazzling scintillations
  From the golden throne
Of the King of Nations
  Cheer these sinners prone.
And the words are spoken:
  " WINNERS IN THE FIGHT,
" SEE, YOUR BONDS ARE BROKEN,
  " ENTER INTO LIGHT!"

There shall be no sound of weeping or of wailing,
Nor dread disease, nor sorrows' blighting breath,
There shall none be sick or sorry, weak or ailing,
In the Land that lies beyond the river Death!

No frost can blight the beauty of the flowers,
No sun is there, yet everlasting day;
A mystic splendour gilds the topaz towers,
And gleams in glory on the golden way.

The glory of the Lord alone shall lighten,
The gates of pearl shall swing their welcome wide,
And passing in, the anxious faces brighten,
Gaining the goal for which they trembling tried.

Then rises up the hum of gladsome greetings,
  And hands are clasped in nameless ecstasy;
But who can tell the manner of the meetings,
  Or guess the grandeur of the sights they see?

They shall be there ye little thought would enter,
  Some of all nations, some of every sect,
White man and black man, churchman and dissenter,
  Clad in the uniform of God's elect.

Cheeks that on earth were pale, and wan, and faded,
  Hollow with pain, or furrowed deep with care,
Forms that on earth were weary, worn, and jaded,
  Bloom in their health and angels' beauty there!

Where all are brave, and true, and tender hearted,
  Where ties long severed sweetly bud again,
Where parents meet a darling long departed,
  Whose fond embrace repays their earthly
    pain.

And harsher voices mix with children's prattle,
  And martial forms in plenty meet the eyes ;
For deathless crowns are won in deadly battle,
  And valour has its mansion in the skies.

So earth's false cliques shall find a lasting level,
  And titles and distinctions disappear,
For all alike have battled with the devil,
  And all alike the victor's crown shall wear.

See father, mother, youth, and merry maiden,
  Sport on the plains where crystal rivers run,

Where breezes soft with sweetest scents are
laden;
Laugh happy crowds with life's long conflict
done!

Who can tell the splendour
Of the songs they sing,
Where the angels render
Praises to their King,—
Where the sainted elders
Raise their ceaseless cries,
And the glare bewilders
Unaccustomed eyes?
Nothing now can sever
Dearest friends again,
Ever, and for ever,
Free from toil and pain.

Earth's remotest rover
  Thus ascends the sky,
And the great Jehovah
  Wipeth every eye.

A STUDY IN ASTRONOMY.

BY A MILD MAN.

I'M considered melancholic,
For I'm much averse to frolic,
And I love pursuits bucolic,
And the study of the moon :
Balls and parties drive me frantic,
And I'm often thought pedantic,
Yet at times I feel romantic,
And I'm partial to a spoon.

With a mind a shade chaotic,
Sometimes staid and then erotic,
I adore things telescopic
  And the study of the spheres:
And I love to take my glasses
Where no rude observer passes,
Far from military asses
  With their supercilious sneers.

As the daylight was expiring,
From the Esplanade retiring,
With my telescope admiring
  All the beauties of the skies;
From the tube one moment glancing,
To the lonely spot advancing,
Came a female form entrancing,
  As I quailed in shy surprise.

For I knew the siren slightly,
I had watched her blooming brightly,
I had marked her moving lightly,
  Every sunny afternoon;
But I curbed my admiration,
Checked my wish for mild flirtation,
Volunteered some information
  On the mountains in the moon.

Craved her gracious condescension,
While I drew her best attention
To the milky way's extension
  Through the realms of boundless space;
And, my wish at once divining,
O'er us Venus softly shining,
To the aperture inclining,
  She has bent her lovely face.

Is the action worth the doing?
Would she listen to my wooing?
Will she dash my hopes to ruin
  With an answer cold and icy?
Never yet a woman hater,
Shall I be to Love a traitor?
Think of Cæsar Imperator
  And his "*Veni, vidi, vici!*"

She may have a mind retentive,
Yet she fails to be attentive,
And she lacks a real incentive
  To the study of the stars:
When she says the light is trying,
I can see her thoughts are flying,
And I fancy she is sighing
  For a different sort of Mars.

Though I trust I'm not obtrusive,
Or by any means exclusive,
Yet I say it 's not conducive
  To a study of the moon :
When towards us slowly saunters
Captain Fleming of the " Flaunters,"
Chief among the many haunters
  Of her daily afternoon.

Now my style is not defiance,
On my strength I've no reliance,
And I'm only fit for science
  And the study of the stars ;
I am filled with consternation
When I grasp the situation,
I have spoilt an assignation
  With the captain of hussars !

I am sallow, shy, and forty,
He is thirty, handsome, haughty,
She is twenty, dimpled, naughty,
  Oh, my eyes are open now!
I can trace their calm collusion,
And retire in grand confusion,
With a weather-wise allusion,
  And a very awkward bow.

So you see, my brother sages,
We shall never win love's gages,
It has been the same for ages,
  And we can't compete with Mars:
'Twas the awkwardest hiâtus,
So I pack my apparatus;—
Can you wonder women hate us
  And the study of the stars?

GOOD-NIGHT.

WE passed the place where we were wont
To say Good-bye ;
We passed the spot we used to haunt,
I heard you sigh.
I waited for the old farewell,
I used to claim it as a right,
And from your lips there only fell,
" Good-night."

I need not ask you, I could name
Your reason ;

For lovers have, like cucumber and game,
  Their season.
You need not fear that I shall stand
A single moment in your light;
You perhaps will let me kiss your hand?
  "Good-night."

I cannot tell my loss like some,
  In verse sublime;
No doubt a perfect peace will come
  In God's own time.
Pleasant, unbroken be your rest,
Your future life be bright,
I pray you may be always blest.
  "Good-night."

But if the storm-clouds gather round
  Some future day,

And happiness you thought was found
  Should fade away;
Remember when the shadows fall,
That one you now may slight,
Will answer to your faintest call.
  "Good-night!"

AFTER THE BALL.

THE dance is done; and I loose your hand,
And I watch your face as you breathless stand,
While the final crash from the weary band
Floats out on the morning air.
And my thoughts to-night will backward fly,
And I think of the times that you and I
Have danced together in days gone by—
May I have the rose you wear?

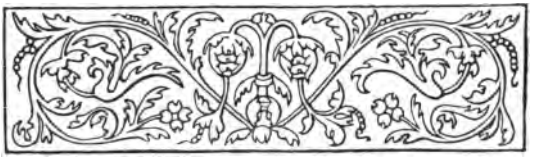
I 'll keep it safe till a brighter day,
I can't say all I should like to say,
For I know your carriage stops the way,
  By your sister's angry glance.
Though our last farewell is cruelly cold,
I can squeeze the little hand I hold,
Remember me and the tale I 've told,
  And think of our final dance.

You may feel quite sure that where'er I roam,
In foreign lands, on the ocean's foam,
I shall think of you in your distant home,
  When the evening shades fall fast.
In fancy, fresh from the ball-room glare,
I shall see you stand as you 're standing there;
While the soft breeze kisses your lips and hair,
  You 'll think of the time that 's past.

You 'll flirt, I know, and you 're not to blame—
If I were you I should do the same—
And kindly smile on an ancient flame,
  And the world at large entrance.
So laugh away! for you know I know
That you 're true as steel, and as pure as snow,
And love in your eyes will never glow
  Till we meet in another dance.

Who would think the hours could fly so fast?
Don't stand so sad, with your eyes downcast;
Just one long look—it may be the last—
  And smile on me once again.
Of course good-byes should be said alone,
But the time is up, and the drama 's done,
And the awful frowns of your chaperone
  Will turn my heated brain.

I may tie the cords of your opera cloak?
But I won't attempt the usual joke,
For I feel I 'm very near a choke
  At that sweet, beseeching glance.
But brighten up! for you know I know
That you 're true as steel, and as pure as snow,
And love in your eyes shall surely glow
  When we meet in another dance.



A LOVE TOKEN.

I.

TAKE my arm, Ben, be so good;
See, the hillock through the wood,
That 's the very place she stood
When I saw her first.
We 'd been marching, rank and file,
Getting on for twenty mile,
Bound to catch the "Crocodile,"
I was at my worst.

Thompson led the Grenadier,
I was marching with the Rear,
When I saw her standing near,
  In that very place.
On my word, Ben, she was fair,
With a lot of splendid hair,
And a touch-me-if-you-dare
  Look upon her face.

So my heart was beating fast,
I held back the very last,
All the cold, proud look had passed,
  Seemed to melt and break;
And I hear her softly say,
"God preserve them in the fray,
Bring them back another day,
  For His mercy's sake!"

'Twas no time for etiquette,
I was plucky then, you bet:
"You're the sweetest girl I've met,
  Wandering far and near;
Smile upon me once," I said,
"Say one word and raise your head:
Would you grieve if I were dead,
  Shed the silent tear?"

And I whispered, half in play,
"I'll come back another day;
Think of me when I'm away,
  Or my heart will break."
And I tore a button—so—
From my tunic's sleeve, you know,
Saying, "Keep it while I go,
  For a soldier's sake."

Tossing all that stormy night,
Just beyond the Isle of Wight,
She was present to my sight,
  Ever in my dreams.
And I leave you, Ben, to guess
How her maiden loveliness,
How the flutter of her dress,
  Came with morning beams.

II.

Think of the day that we stormed the Redan,
  Ben,
  Think of the way that we charged up the hill;
That was the last time that ever I ran, Ben,
  And but for you I 'd be lying there still.

Hurled to the ground, while the sound of the cheering
Rang in my ears as the column rushed by
Rank upon rank, till my senses and hearing
Faded away, and I fell back to die.

Yours the stout arms that so gallantly bore me
Back to the rear when the battle was done;
Yours the strong voice that did more to restore me
Than all the doctor's stuff under the sun.

Little I thought, with my leg gone to glory,
Shattered to bits, and a ball in my chest;
Little I thought I should tell you this story,
Here on the spot that my darling has pressed.

But as I lay 'mid the dead and the dying,
  Deep in delirium, maddened with pain,
Back to these woodlands, in memory flying,
  Humbly I prayed I might see her again.

III.

" She is coming, she is coming,
  'Tis her charming form, I vow;
She is standing on the hillock,
  I can see her plainly now."

She has turned and seen him standing
  Undecided what to do,
And her heart beats loud and wildly,
  For her dream is coming true.

So he forward limps to meet her,—
"God preserved me in the fray,
See, your shattered soldier lover
Has come back another day."

To her cheeks the colour rushes,
All the weary days are past;
Little Beauty, spare your blushes,
You have found your love at last.

For the soldier's arms enfold her,
She has found a welcome rest,
With her head upon his shoulder,
And his button on her breast.

FAR AWAY.

LITTLE maid, I 'm thinking of you
Every day,
Do you realize I love you?
Darling say!
Will you in your sunny clime
Toss aside my humble rhyme,
Careless of the happy time
Passed away?

Just recall the day you started,
Only try:

Shall we meet the way we parted,
    You and I?
If you should be cold as ice,
Stiff and formal and precise,
Anything in fact but nice,
    I should die!

Absence makes the heart grow fonder,
    Poets say.
Do you find it so, I wonder,
    Far away.
Do you think of me one bit
When the beaux around you flit,
Win your smiles with feeble wit
    In their way?

Are you still that corner keeping
    In your heart?

I am with you waking, sleeping,
Though apart.
Dreary doubts aside I hurl,
Sure through Life's exciting whirl
You will be the darling girl
Of my heart.

A CURTAIN LECTURE.

I KNEW you would say she was fresh
and delightful,
I knew you would rave of her eyes
and her hair;
The fit of her dress, I assure you, was frightful,
And as for her style and her beauty—Well,
there!
I only can say that it makes me quite spiteful
To see how you men nudge each other, and
stare

At anything new. And no doubt you were quite full
Of her at your club! Well, it's not my affair!

Why, her dress from her shoulders was actually falling,
I think it's a shame that such things are allowed;
The rouge on her face was disgusting, appalling,
Her lips touched with carmine—and I could have vowed
(Though I fear to your feelings the thought may be galling,
And men are so sensitive, touchy, and proud,)
That she felt out of place, for the stage was her calling,—
And this is the object to which you have bowed!

I think it is due to my birth and my station
That I should be safe from such meetings as these;
Your own tastes, I know, are beyond reformation,
But if I 'm let down, let me down by degrees.
I saw Lady Smith was in deep consternation,
She little knew whom she had asked, and she sees
That the woman was trying to court admiration,
Though you may defend her as much as you please.

I watched all the evening her manners and bearing,
Her meaningless smile, and her sly silly pout;
I heard you beseech her to go for an airing
Some day down to Kew, when the drags were about.

And pray, sir, who gave you the rose you were wearing,
And which you will prize as a relic, no doubt?
The thought drives me mad! The idea of her daring
Such things in my presence! But murder will out!

I saw your manœuvres, the court you were paying,
Three rounds in succession you cannot think right;
I saw the note pass when the gallop was playing,
You think I am old, but I still have my sight.
I know you believe that the things I 've been saying
Are horribly jealous, and outbursts of spite;

They are meant for your good, and I 'm hoping
and praying
That morning will show you your error. Good-
night !

THE LAST ACT.

"L'HOMME QUI RIT."

THE evening shades succeed the day,
The vessel holds her even way,
Upon the deck, sweet Dea lay
With Gymplaine bending o'er her :
She knows that Life is ebbing fast,
She feels that Death is come at last,
Sweet visions of the sunny past
In fancy flit before her.

"You 'll think of me when I am gone,
You will not leave me long alone,
How dull the time until you come,
  How lonely Heaven's space!"
She cannot hear his wild replies,
A splendour flashes in her eyes,
And crying "Light! I see!" she dies,
  A smile upon her face.

"I come!" he cried, and slowly strode
To where the silent ocean flowed;
A passing gleam of glory showed
  Her spirit soaring home.
His hands above his head held high,
He sees a star in starless sky,
And meets the waters with the cry,
  "I come! Behold, I come!"

So, Victor Hugo, in my rhyme
I paraphrase your prose sublime,
And pay my tribute at the shrine
  Of Genius—grand and free.
In fancy Ursus' hand I pressed,
And smoothed old Homo's shaggy crest,
But always loved sweet Dea best,
  And envied "L'homme qui rit."

"CRAS INGENS ITERABIMUS ÆQUOR."

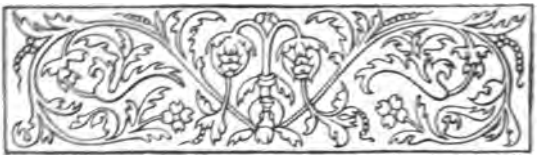
A SAILOR'S song you 'd have me tip,
A song—well, let me see;
We sail to-morrow—there 's our ship,
She 's lying by the quay.
Her anxious sails await the gales,
The sea lies wide before us,
My mates are here with laugh and cheer,
So join me in a chorus.

We leave no enemies behind,
  No thoughts of spite or rancour;
We are at peace with all mankind
  Before we weigh the anchor.
With laugh and jest we do our best
  To stifle vain emotion;
The morrow's morn shall see us borne
  Upon the boundless ocean.

My love is standing down below,
  And heaves, perchance, a sigh;
A kiss upon the breeze I blow,
  And wave a last good-bye.
Come, dry that tear and never fear,
  Nor let your face grow paler;
Some future day, with features gay,
  You 'll welcome back your sailor!

And when your lovely head in sleep
  Shall press the happy pillow,
You 'll dream of us as on the deep
  We breast the bounding billow.
The tempest-scream may break your dream,
  You 'll mark the storm's commotion,
And perhaps you 'll spare a thought, a prayer,
  For those upon the ocean.

But love's romance we must despise
  And banish from our mind,
Beneath our bows the white foam flies,
  The shore lies far behind,
With song and jest we do our best
  To stifle vain emotion ;
No pains or cares our vessel bears
  Across the boundless ocean.



LOVE IN THE FIELD.

OH, ecstasy! a cloudy sky!
Along the narrow lanes I fly,
An eastern wind is blowing;
I hurry onwards to the meet,
And, feeling firmer in my seat,
I urge along my courser fleet,
And revel in his going.

My lady fair will sure be there,
Gigantic jumps for her I 'll dare,
And show that I 'm a rider.

And so I gaily caracole
Along the road, and reach the goal;
A welcome smile from her I stole,
  And reined my steed beside her.

Oh, wily fox! oh, painful knocks
Of bumpy ground, and sudden shocks
  That suit not feelings tender!
But on my lady smoothly sails,
And gaily flies the post and rails;
My horse is tired, my courage fails,
  My hopes are getting slender.

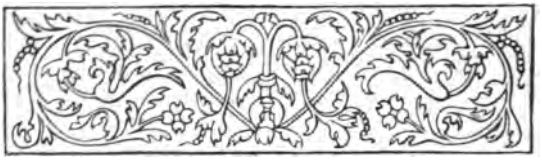
A sudden check! The foam and fleck
Stands thick upon my horse's neck,
  I also am perspiring.
Again the hounds are running free,
A muddy stream in front I see,

I 'll take it like a man, and she
  Must follow on admiring.

Oh, painful wound! oh, sticky ground!
Oh, muddy slush that surges round,
  And clasps me as I fall!
Oh, fatal leap of fiery steed!
Oh, vain attempt, delusive speed!
Oh, heartless men that take no heed!
  Oh, pleasure turned to gall!

My heart's delight! It was not right,
You saw me in my sorry plight,
  And smiled at my disaster;
You passed me in your swift career,
You jumped the streamlet safe and clear,
You left me lying helpless here,
  And galloped on the faster!

With might and main came down the rain,
The vixen lives to fight again,
  For to an earth they ran her;
But I will hunt no more, I vow,
I reached my home I know not how,
My hopes are dashed to atoms now,
  Oh, fair and false Diana!



A TALE OF THE CRIMEA.

I.

MUST I for ever haunt the barrack square,
And sicken unto death of dull parade?
I long and languish for a fresher air,
And gasp for country breeze and country shade.
Must I for ever hear the mess-room talk,
And join in everlasting games of pool?

Oh, Fortune, find for me a rustic walk,
With budding beauty in the evening's cool!
A happy thought! A quiet relation lives
And yearns for me among the pleasant shires,
The general invitation that he gives
Will suit full well my present quiet desires.
So, friends, farewell! I shun the call to arms,
I fly the dust of this forbidding place,
I hail the country with its sober charms,
And rave of rustic pleasures for a space.

II.

I sauntered slowly down the path,
And swung the wicket gate,
And, careless where my footsteps turned,
I went to meet my Fate!

A passing glance; she hastens by,
  And life is blank to me!
A face I 've fancied in my dreams,
  But hardly hoped to see.

Full often when in pleasant chains
  Of fragrant nicotine,
Amid the curling wreaths of smoke
  An ideal face I 've seen;

A face that made my pulses beat,
  That lingered in my heart,
But little did I think to meet
  A living counterpart!

I never could appraise her charms
  As novel writers do,
Nor sing the glories of her hair,
  And eyes of softest blue.

I only pray that, Cæsar like,
Before the week is done,
I may be able to exclaim,
"I came, I saw, I won!"

III.

I saw her, spoke, was answered and was happy,
For fortune smiles on him who boldly tries;
What joy to hear the ripple of her laughter,
The music of her voice as she replies!
As pure she is, as holy as the angels,
As graceful as the swallows on the wing,
As fair and fresh and fragrant as the flowers,
As blooming as the buds in early spring!

How sweet her silence, for I know the cause!
  How soft the light that glistens in her eyes!
Let others struggle for the world's applause,
  I am content, for I have won my prize!

Above the distant hills the sunset glowing,
  We homewards walk beneath the branching trees;
With new found love our hearts are overflowing,
  We hear the angels' voices in the breeze.
True sings the bard "To part is sweetest sorrow,"
  For sweet are long last words below the breath,
A parting whisper "We shall meet to-morrow!
  I love you! I shall love you till my death!"

* * * * *

Never again to meet, till trumpets sounding
  Send their shrill summons on the Judgment Day,
And from affrighted rocks the echoes bounding
  Waken the dead, and stir the lifeless clay!

IV.

The nation wakes from a lengthened peace,
  The sound of war goes forth,
And the Queen of the Seas only waits for the
    breeze
  To battle the King of the North.

The soldiers march through the crowded streets
  On their way to the war-bound ships,
And Joe tramps by with a tear in his eye,
  And a saucy smile on his lips.

With a tear in eye for the lass that he loves,
  With her last fond words in his mind,
While the bugles blare to the martial air
  Of the Girl he 's left behind.

There are bayonets waiting for you, poor Joe,
  And swords that are sharp gleam bright,
There's bullet and shell, and fever as well,
  But there 's glory to win in the fight.

And they 'll put up a stone in the village church,
  To say how you nobly died
For country and Queen, how your memory's green,
  And a Latin quotation beside!

And when the hour of evening comes,
  Be sure in the firelight glow
They 'll speak of the day, and tell of the way
  That you fell with your face to the foe.

And your village mates who work at the plough
  Will talk of you under their breath,

And honour the brave in his distant grave,
  And envy you, Joe, in your death.

Such is Glory! The spell of the scarlet coat,
  The charm of the trumpet's bray,
Of the rifle's ring and the sabre's swing,
  Will last till the last great Day!

And thousands are ready and willing now
  To grapple with Death in his lair,
And cast away life in a hopeless strife
  For a glory they cannot share!

V.

Thunder and rain in a hurricane,
  And a pitiless freezing blast;

The cannons boom through the murky gloom
  And the iron hail falls fast!
Thunder and rain! and her voice again,
  In lull of the tempest roar,
Seems breathing above those words of love
  That will haunt me evermore.
Thunder and rain in a hurricane,
  Roll ye waves of the sea,
Blow, winds, blow where I would go,
  Carry a message from me!

Hasten and whisper a word at her window,
  Whisper it low:
When the winds whistle she will be waking,
  Watching, I know.
Watching and waiting, expecting a message
  When the winds blow!

Tenderly tap on the glass of the casement,
  Lest she should start ;
All the fond words I have told to the tempest
  Freely impart.
Tell her of soft sunny tresses I treasure
  Next to my heart.

Speak not of days that are lonesome and dreary,
  Nights full of pain ;
Tell her to dream of delights that will surely
  Greet us again ;
Say that the sunshine seems always the brighter
  After the rain !

Prate not of perils that daily surround us
  Facing the foe,
Tell her I think of her loving and constant ;
  Is it not so ?

Hasten and whisper these words at her window,
  Whisper them low!

VI.

Illness comes with all its horrors,
  Comes upon the wings of time,
Strikes a two-edged sword in circles,
  Strikes at innocence and crime;
Strikes a fresh and fair-haired maiden
  Just in bloom of health and prime.

When the autumn leaves are falling
  Stalks this tyrant through the place,
Lays his ghastly hand upon her,
  Takes the roses from her face,
Takes the roundness from her figure,
  Takes her elegance and grace.

When the autumn sun is sinking
  In his wealth of gold and glare,
When the evening bells fall faintly
  Through the perfume-laden air,
Angels come within the chamber,
  Come to fetch sweet Goldenhair.

She has done with earthly passions,
  All is ended—She is dead!
With the slanting of the sunbeams
  Wreathed in radiance round her head;
While the loving rays are lingering
  For a spirit that has fled.

Yes! and there is joy in Heaven
  When the fair recruit appears,
Tenderly the Father greets her,
  Smiles away her gravest fears,

Tells her that her trials are over,
Wipes away the rising tears.

VII.

Dead! My God, it cannot be!
Dead! My darling gone from me!
Stolen, dragged apart—
Stay, it cannot be the truth,
Who would kill her in her youth,
Who could have the heart?—

Tell me! Can you tell me why
Of all others she should die?
'Tis a paper's heartless lie,
Hope still shows a gleam!—
Dead! My darling gone from me!
Dead! My sweet, it cannot be!

Speak, my darling, speak to me,
  Say it is a dream!

But the cursed printed letters
  Seem to burn into my eyes;
Seem to hiss in accents bitter,
  "Look again, we tell no lies;
  It is true!"
Hush! I even hear the knell—
Slowly, slowly, swings the bell,
And the tolling says as well,
  "It is true!"
  "*True, true, true, true!*"

I bow my head upon my breast,
I strive to think it for the best,
I see her in a perfect rest,
  Far away from pain.

An angel on a radiant shore,
My love has only gone before.
Oh! Father, fit me more and more
  Her place to gain!

My life is done, my flag is furled,
My idol to the ground is hurled,
And all around I see the world
  Dreary, dark, in hue.
The paper swims in misty haze,
The letters shrivel in my gaze,
And far away the tolling says,
  "It is true!"

VIII.

A weary watching through an endless night,
A ghastly flicker of the lantern's light,
A constant moaning, and the restless cry
Of those in anguish that would love to die.
A weary watching through an endless night,
A ceaseless longing for the welcome light.
He sinks in slumber with the first glad gleam,
And pain is banished in a radiant dream.

She has glided from the graveyard,
  She has sailed across the sea,
She has flitted round the foreland,
  And my darling comes to me.
I can feel her saintly presence
  As she steals within the room,

I can trace a ghostly radiance
  As it struggles through the gloom.

She is standing by the window
  In the dress she used to wear,
And my ring is on her finger,
  And the light is on her hair.
And the night breeze on the mountain
  Seems to hush and fade away,
As in well-remembered accents
  I can hear her softly say,

"Does my soldier boy remember,
  As he lies in bitter pain,
Those few happy days that never
  Can come back to us again?
Does he think I said it vainly,
  Idly, when with bated breath

On that happy day I promised
  That I would be true in death?"

Up I sprang and tried to grasp her,
  Tried to clasp that vision fair,
But too late her form has faded,
  And I clutch the empty air.
So I sink with pain exhausted,
  Faint and helpless there I lie,
And in tones with anguish broken,
  Came my feeble, frenzied cry—

"I have loved your gentle virtues,
  I have loved your graceful form,
You were sweet to me in sunshine,
  You were dearest in the storm!
Evermore a fair face floated
  In the camp and on the wave,

I have loved you living ever,
I shall love you in the grave!"

IX.

He rises from his sickness, and he sees
A dreary blank, his life without an aim;
Her features float before him, every breeze
That flaps the canvas sighs the well loved name.
He cannot live without her. This he knows.
He feels the shadow of a coming fate,
And fears it not. A settled longing grows
To learn the secrets of the future state;
A strange impatience, and a strong desire
To court grim Death amid the battle's roar,
To bear the fullest brunt of steel and fire,
And die a soldier! Thoughts of Heaven's shore
For ever chase each other through his mind.
Since she has put on immortality,

Do features change? Will she be hard to find?
  Can she be fairer than she used to be?

So passed dull days and nights with sluggish
    breath,
  Until a bright October morning came,
When reckless horsemen rode to certain death,
  And earned a splendid glory, and a name
For British soldiers that can never fade
  Or lose its lustre in the years to come;
A name that makes us honoured and obeyed,
  And safe from insult in our island home!

X.

Swords are ringing, clashing,
  As the squadrons close;
Troopers madly slashing
  At their shrinking foes.

Pistol shots are knelling,
  Dense the dust-clouds roll,
Each report is telling
  Of a severed soul!

In the charge the quickest,
  Foremost in the fight,
Where death's hand raged thickest
  There his sword flashed bright;
There his voice rang loudest,
  There the blood ran red.
God cuts off the proudest,
  And his soul has fled!

Mangled forms are lying
  On the blood-soaked sod,
Where the trooper dying
  Yields his soul to God.

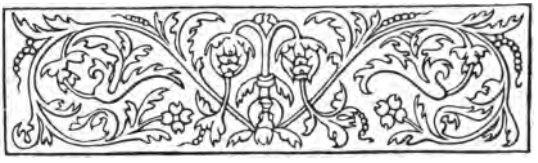
Breezes moaning, sweeping,
  And the night-dews shed;
Nature softly weeping
  For the noble dead.

Tenderly they bore him
  To his hallowed grave,
Green the grass grows o'er him,
  Jesus loves the brave.
May the earth lie lightly,
  And from azure skies
May the sun beam brightly
  Where my hero lies.

* * * *

And when death's deep river
  Ye have safely passed,
When ye reach for ever
  Heaven's gate at last,

All her sorrows over,
See my lady fair,
See her soldier lover
Live in glory there.



POLICE DIRECTIONS.

TO A YOUNG MEMBER OF THE FORCE.

I.

IF a solitary gent,
Walking homewards, should resent
Your remarks as impudent,
Call your questions insolent,
Mind you say he's tight;
Run him in without a thought,
You know how, at least you ought,
Death to him to you is sport,

You can swear before the Court
  Simply—black is white.

II.

Any person in a fit,
Gives a chance to show your wit,
Don't excite yourself a bit;
Drink, of course! He smells of it!
  Drag him to the Station.
Gentle treatment we despise,
What's the difference if he dies:
But what does excite surprise
Are the comments that arise,
  And the indignation!

III.

If a burglar you should see
Operating with a key,

Don't disturb him violently,
Things might turn out rough, and he
  Jemmy would be using;
At a distance loudly cough,
Raise your arms, your helmet doff,
Flash your bull's-eye, he 'll be off!
Never mind if people scoff,
  We can stand abusing.

IV.

One direction I 'd forgot,
You must find a secret spot
Which your serjeant knoweth not,
Where the grog is sweet and hot,
  And the barmaid pretty;
When the time to close is come,
Cut your duty in the slum,
Gaily with the Landlord chum,

Sit and sip your steaming rum,
  Somewhere in the City!

V.

Always have a scornful air,
If you 're wanted, don't be there;
If you see a row, take care
That your duty lies elsewhere
  Till the row shall cease.
Thus I end my cautions few,
These small matters keep in view,
And I tell you plainly, you
Will turn out a credit to
  England's brave Police.

REGRETS.

A VICTIM of Ambition's strife,
A bondsman in her chain,
I see too late a wasted life
Of efforts made in vain.

Your love has been the one bright spot
That cheered each weary day;
Now Death shall cut the tangled knot,
And clear the clouds away.

I grieve that for my selfish ends
  I caused you pain and care;
A future world shall make amends,
  And rapture greet you there.

And so when life at length shall fade,
  And death's embrace entwine,
I pray, as I have ever prayed,
  Your hand may rest in mine.

I feel that I can smile at death,
  Your kiss upon my brow,
And in the halo of your breath
  My troubles melt as snow!

THE SONG OF THE SOLDIER.

THROUGH the arches of the Hall,
Rang a martial strain,
Loudly comes the soldier's call,
"Comrade, sing again!"

"Shall I of my sweetheart rave,
Tell of love and kisses,
Sing a sentimental stave,
Such a one as this is?"

Girl of my heart, with your long silky tresses,
  Talk to me kindly, for no one is near,
Cease to be coy, for you know the time presses,
  Moments are golden, and why should you fear?

I am content, for the blush that is spreading
  Over the cheeks that my lips long to touch
Tells me the time has been fixed for the wedding;
  Say that you love me, and show me how much.

Show me how much in the way that is meetest,
  Pay me the ocean of debts that you owe,
Words may be sweet but your kisses are sweetest,
  Soft as the flakes of the fresh fallen snow!

Only believe 'tis an innocent pleasure,
  Spite of what sour-grained spinsters can say;
Life is so short you must give me full measure,
  Something to think of when I am away.

Cling to me closer! I love you so dearly,
Counting the days till I make you my wife.
Hush! We must part, for the bugle sounds clearly,
Calling me back to the humdrum of life.

Through the arches of the Hall
Rang the softer strain,
Loudly comes the soldier's call,
"Comrade, take a drain!"

"Take some pretty potent sips,
Sense will come the quicker;
Wash the kisses from your lips,
Never spare the liquor!"

THERMOPYLÆ.

STATESMEN may toil, each abusing
his neighbour,
Winning their fame without striking
a blow,
Give me the fame that is won with the sabre,
Give me my death with my face to the foe!

Do you remember that exquisite daring,
Staunch to the last when no succour was nigh,
Spartans fought fiercely, and never despairing
Left us a lesson how heroes should die!

Comrades in life that so brilliantly ended,
  In death not divided, how peaceful their sleep;
Spare your regrets, for the struggle was splendid,
  And bright the reward they shall certainly reap.

Marble their tomb: where a lion is standing
  Gazing defiantly over the sea,
Thus to posterity silently handing
  Patterns of prowess for you and for me.

Tower, grim prince of the forest, above them,
  Spread thy limbs lovingly over their grave;
Years have rolled by, but we ever shall love them,
  Deep in our hearts are the deeds of the brave!

BREAKING THE NEWS.

GIVE your hand, my burly farmer,
We shall never disagree,
Though I know you love the charmer
Who is all the world to me.

She has told me all her sorrows,
She has told your dreadful deeds,
Of your strolls among the furrows,
Of your love among the swedes;

How you stood in hobnailed glory,
  With your gun upon your arm,
How you told the ancient story,
  How you proffered heart and farm;

So she knows you're sentimental,
  And she grieves she must refuse,
And she begg'd me to be gentle
  When I broke the bitter news.

If in dreams the joy-bells jangled,
  You must chase the dreams away,
And forget your heart was mangled,
  There are worse ills every day.

For she doats on the piano,
  And she cannot milk the cows;
And you're partial to guano,
  And the double-furrow ploughs.

Burly friend, the ice is broken,
  We are sure to meet again,
You'll forgive me if I've spoken
  Any words to give you pain.

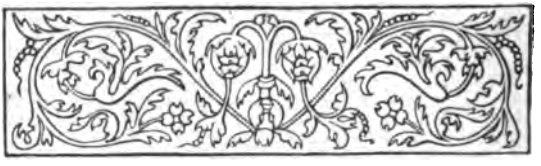
And, believe me, time will soften
  All the roughness of the blow ;
And you'll come and see us often,
  When you're up for Cattle Show ?

SUPER MARE.

THINKING of other times,
Sweet visions grow,
Dreams of the by-gone days
Come to me now.
Clasp me in your soft arms,
Kiss me once more,
Say the sweet words you said
Down on the shore.
Others are whispering where
You and I talked,

Others are ling'ring where
  You and I walked.
Mellow the music sounds,
  Far down below,
Floats up the air you loved
  Long years ago!
Pacing the chalky cliff,
  Scents of the sea,
Sighs of the ocean breeze,
  Bring you to me.
Shells on the sandy shore,
  Ripples of tide,
Bring back the happy days,
  You by my side.
Some spot in yonder sky
  Hides from my view
All that I loved on earth
  Under its blue.

So with sad thoughts of thee
  Sinks the sun low,
Back to life's drudgery
  Weary I go!



AN EASTERN LEGEND.

WHEN the Knights of the Cross so bravely fought
In the burning eastern regions,
When muscles were all, and brains were nought,
And Troubadours wandered in legions,
There lived a King in a sunny clime
With seventy wives in his harem,
And if they displeased him, this Sultan sublime
Was never accustomed to spare them.

He swished off their heads with his scimitar bright
  And placed them on shelves in his study;
But his time came at last, and a brave English
    Knight
  Paid off this old Potentate bloody!

Sir Guy gave his heart to a fair young maid
  Who dwelt in a country villa,
And Isabelle loved him so much, she said
  If he died it would certainly kill her.
The King heard the fame of the fair Isabelle,
  And pressing attentions he paid her,
And he fancied at last it would be as well
  Some night to serenade her.
Sir Guy chanced to hear of the Potentate's plan,
  And being aware of his habits,
He placed in the grass where the pathway began
  A gin that was made to catch rabbits.

A cloudy night. It was chill and dark
  When the Sultan set out with his fiddle,
And just as he got to the grass of the Park
  He dropped down his bow in the middle.
It happened to fall where the sharp-toothed gin
  In ambush lay ready for battle,
In stooping he touched off the catch with his chin,
  And it sprang with a crash and a rattle!
Gory, distorted, and lifeless he lay,
  In his neck the sharp teeth were imbedded;
Sir Guy made a call at the villa next day,
  And the fair Isabella he wedded.
And oft told the tale to his children and kin,
  And chuckled and laughed o'er his toddy;
His crest was a fiddle and sharp-toothed gin,
  And his motto, "Fidèle, gin a body!"

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

WHAT am I thinking of, lying so long
Silently here in the heat?
No, I'm not guessing the size of your boots;
Granted, your ankles are neat.

Perhaps that was rude, but I'm sure you'll forgive;
Memories crowd on me so.
This was the day that the Skyrocket sailed
Three weary summers ago.

This was the day that a fair-haired girl
  Sobbed out such a sweet good-bye;
This was the day that a handkerchief waved
  So long in the evening sky.

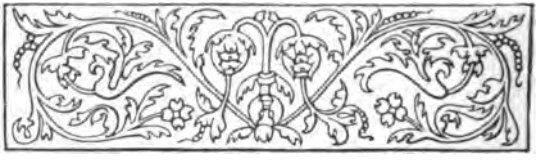
Fool that I was that I didn't speak out,
  But I felt so sure that you knew.
How could I picture a great city swell
  Taking a fancy to you?

What do you talk about when you're alone?
  Surely the hours must drag?
You with your pretty and dreamy romance,
  He with his money and brag.

I like that dress. And you look so nice
  With the soft sad glance in your face;
Love me again as you used to love
  Just for an hour's space.

Fancy the years have rolled lightly back,
  Fancy that you are free,
Fancy the days that we might have spent
  If you had trusted me!

Rolls on the world in the timeworn groove,
  Just the old tale come true;
You are the Beauty and fat Sir John
  Is the—*Bless me, why how do you do?*



THE TRUMPET.

I.

THROUGH shots, and shouts, and battle smoke,
And groans, my tones their summons spoke
Across the trampled field;
And spurring squadrons swiftly fly
With flash and crash to victory,
To die, but not to yield!

II.

The foe lie low! The battle done,
And thanks to God the victory won,
  Then round the hasty grave;
In fond farewell, my softest note,
My sweetest tone shall lingering float.
  In honour of the brave!

III.

Then peace declared, the conflict o'er,
They sail, and hail old England's shore
  Amid her wreath of foam;
Loud o'er the crowd, my silver strain
'Mid tears and cheers shall rise again
  To hail the heroes home!

A PROPOSAL.

(AFTER TENNYSON.)

HOW addled is my sluggish brain,
How impotent my pen is,
I meant to write the sweetest lines
About our game at tennis.

In vain I burn the midnight oil,
Or rather trim the taper,
I only blot another sheet
Of extra super paper!

No gleam of wit is in my rhymes,
  I know how much they lack it,
My mind is simply out of joint
  Since I laid down the racket.

Again I see your graceful strokes
  And hear your accents fluty,
I know not who the victors were,
  The game was love to beauty.

I don't believe you understood
  How grave my case was getting ;
The God of Love was somewhere near,
  And caught me in the netting !

So please excuse a bolder stroke,
  For Love the game of men is,
And say—Will you my partner be
  In life, as well as tennis ?

OUT OF THE RACE.

COME back again when the blossoms
are bursting,
Longing to look at the slow-coming
Spring;
Ready to bloom in the warmth of your presence,
Wistfully waiting the sunshine you bring.

Are you afraid you are leaving behind you
Loves that are languishing, hearts that will
break?
Come back again, you must chance their repining,
Sail o'er the sea that is smooth for your sake.

Will you not welcome the sight of the coast line
When in the distance the white cliffs arise?
Will not the thought of the home you are nearing
Bring a soft light to your wonderful eyes?

Weary I watch, just to wave you a welcome,
Far in the background I patiently stand;
Spare me a smile, it is all I shall ask for,
Riches and rank may alone touch your hand.

Strange it may seem, yet the world has decreed it,
Love goes for nothing, the wealthy must win;
Have you not learnt in your delicate breeding
Gold is a glory, and poverty sin?

Past are the times when a lineage ancient
Ranked above riches and names that were new;
Dead as the days when the brave and the honest
Yielded no place to the huckster and Jew.

Do not detest me as jealous and gloomy,
  Clouds clear away at a glance from your eyes ;
Why should I weary with hopes that are hopeless,
  Why should you notice my impotent sighs ?

Still, in the midst of your manifold triumphs,
  Think me sincere in the homage I bring ;
Come back again when the blossoms are bursting,
  Longing to look at the slow-coming Spring !

THE END.

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YORKSHIRE ODDITIES,

INCIDENTS, AND STRANGE EVENTS.

BY S. BARING-GOULD, M. A.,

Author of "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," "Iceland: its Scenes and Sagas—the book of Were-wolves," &c.

"There be such a company of wilful gentlemen within Yorkshire as there be not in all England besides."—*Abbot of York to Cromwell,* 1556, *Rolls House MS.*

PREFACE.

A residence of many years in Yorkshire, and an inveterate habit of collecting all kinds of odd and out-of-the-way information concerning men and matters, furnished me, when I left Yorkshire in 1872, with a large amount of material, collected in that county, relating to its eccentric children.

A friend, when he heard that I was collecting such material, exclaimed, "What are you about? Every other Yorkshireman is a character!" Such is the case. No other county produces so much originality—and that originality, when carried to excess, is eccentricity.

I look back with the greatest pleasure to the kindness and hospitality I met with in Yorkshire, where I spent some of the happiest years of my life. I venture to offer this collection of memoirs of odd people, and narrative of strange events, as a humble contribution to the annals of the greatest, not perhaps only in extent, of our English counties, and a slight return for the pleasant welcome it afforded a migratory penman from the South.

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